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Brian Boru

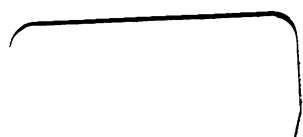
and the

Battle of Clontarf

by

Mrs. M. C. Bine













Brian Boru

AND

THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF.

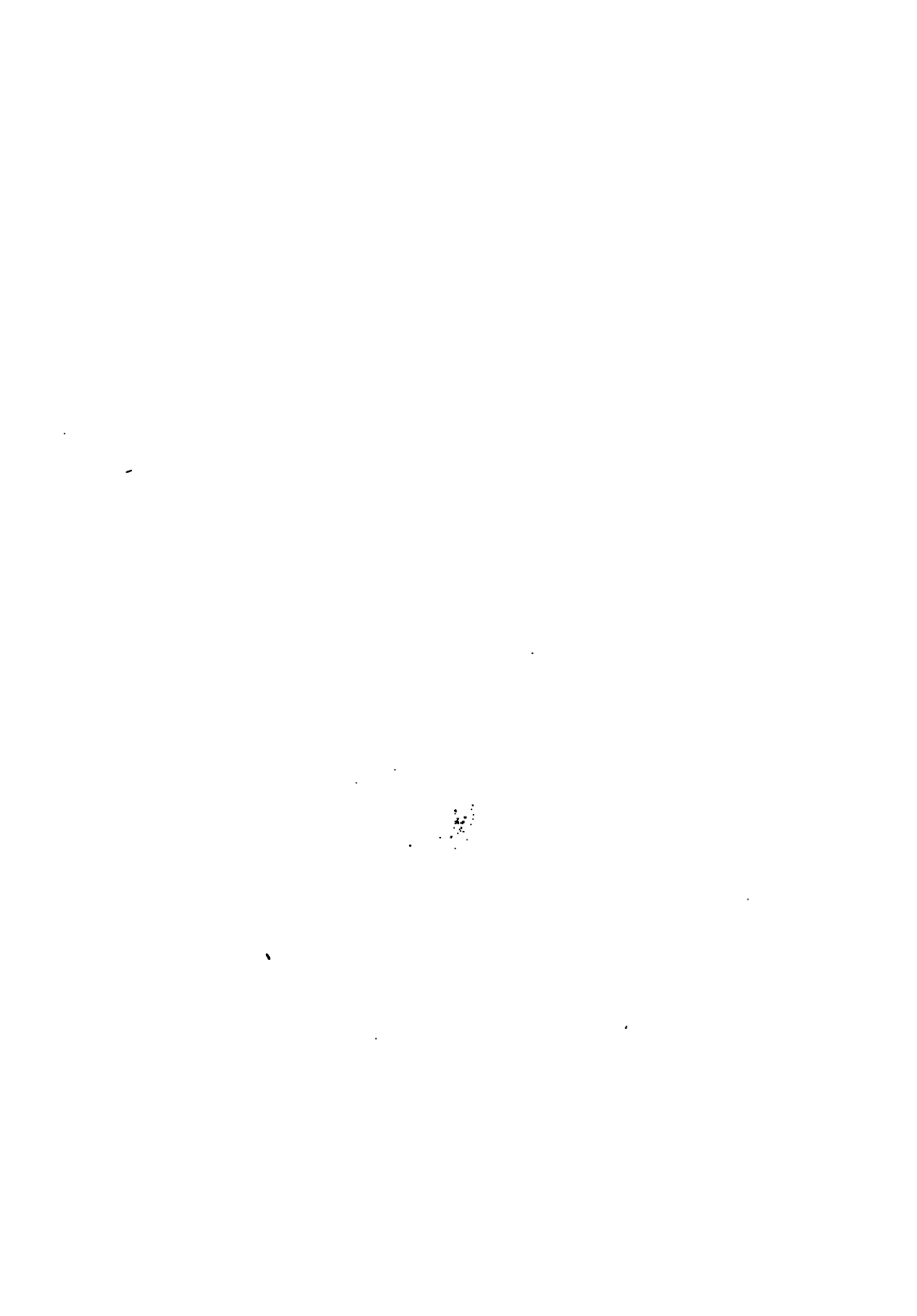








BRIAN BORU'S HARP.  
IN NATIONAL MUSEUM, DUBLIN.





BRIDE KNOT'S HARP  
IN NATIONAL MUSEUM, DUBLIN.

# Brian Boru

AND

## *THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF:*

A Ballad.

BY

MRS. M. C. HIME.



LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

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### A Word to the Reader.

**I**T is twelve years since I read in the leading article of a well-known newspaper words to this effect: "Ireland has no real hero to boast of since her mythical heroes were laid to rest: her records are sad indeed, unenlivened as they are by a single name that can bring honest pride to an Irishman's heart." Stung by the words, though I knew them to be false, I then and there determined to write a ballad to commemorate the deeds of the great Brian, such as boys and girls would care to read. I ask no other public, and address myself to them alone.

To carry out my purpose I explored all the records of the period that were accessible to me, and was



rewarded by the discovery that my hero was far greater even than I had supposed, and that the invasion of Ireland by the northern nations and the battle of Clontarf were regarded by the historians of the time (whether Norse, Icelandic, or Irish) as the most momentous events of the period in which they wrote.

I have done my best to piece the information together so as to make a coherent narrative. Where the accounts were various I have chosen what seemed to me the most probable, but I have never dared to invent. Except in one instance, every word spoken by the great Brian is to be found in the old chronicles. The one scene for which I claim indulgence is the meeting between Brian and Malachy on the morning of the battle. We read that Malachy and the men of Meath joined Brian at the last moment; is it possible then to believe that Brian would have been less generous than his most generous rival, more especially if we are to accept the tradition that the banshee had revealed to Brian the issue of the battle, and foretold Malachy's reaccession as head-king? Internal evidence convinces me that the meeting took place.

( 9 )

With these words I send forth this effort of my enthusiasm. Years have passed since I wrote these verses, but I have never faltered in allegiance to my hero, the great king Brian Boru.

R. H.

FOYLE COLLEGE, *November 1, 1888.*

## Dramatis Personæ.

BRIAN BORU . . . .	<i>Ard-riagh or Head King of Ireland.</i>
MURROGH . . . .	<i>Brian's eldest son, the great hope of his clan.</i>
TURLOGH . . . .	<i>Murrogh's eldest son, aged fifteen.</i>
DONNAL . . . . .	} <i>Other sons of Brian.</i>
CONAL . . . . .	
FLAN . . . . .	
MALACHY . . . .	<i>King of Meath, deposed by Brian from being "Head King." Reinstated some time after Brian's death.</i>
MAELMURRA . . . .	<i>King of Leinster, who raised the Danes and Norsemen against Brian. Brother to Gormley, Brian's second wife.</i>
DUNLAING . . . .	<i>A young chief of Brian's clan.</i>
CONAING . . . .	<i>Nephew to Brian.</i>
BRODAR . . . .	<i>Earl of Man, leader of the Vikings.</i>
CAROLUS . . . . .	} <i>Sons of the King of Norway.</i>
ANRUD . . . . .	
SITRIC . . . . .	<i>Danish King of Dublin, son of Gormley, Brian's second wife, by her first husband Olaf the Dane, and husband to Savé, Brian's daughter by his first wife.</i>
CONMAOL . . . . .	} <i>Viking heroes.</i>
PLAIT . . . . .	
SIGURD . . . . .	<i>Famous Earl of Orkney.</i>
OSPACK . . . . .	<i>Brother to Brodar (a convert to Christianity). He deserted to Brian with ten ships.</i>
GORMLEY . . . . .	<i>Brian's second wife, widow of Olaf the Dane, and mother of Sitric. Sister to Maelmurra.</i>
SAVÉ . . . . .	<i>Brian's daughter by his first wife, married to Sitric.</i>



## Introduction.



WOULD'ST thou hear a grand old story  
From fair Erin's days of yore?  
Such to-night the waves have taught me,  
As they broke upon the shore.

So methinks they ever whisper,  
As this day each year comes round,  
When beneath Clontarf's smooth waters  
Erin's fiercest foes lay drowned.

Backward with the tide receding,  
Thrice three hundred years I'm borne,  
And I gaze on Brian bleeding,  
Him whose fate I cannot mourn ;

For such lives of noble purpose,  
Christ-like, beautiful, and bright,  
Gleam across the times of darkness  
Like a meteor of the night.

And we mark the shining pathway  
Where those burning feet have trod,  
Till it seems to guide our longings  
Nearer to the throne of God.

So, brave Brian, in the darkness  
Dost thou gleam a priceless gem,  
Sparkling through the mist of ages  
In thy country's diadem.

Almost like my fancy's hero  
Doth thy form before me stand ;  
Brave and saint-like, wise and kingly,  
Sweetest bard in Erin's land.

Would thy deeds had worthier setting  
Than these uncouth rhymes of mine !  
Pick the diamond from the dust-heap,  
All undimmed it lives to shine.



## PART I.

### Brian Arises to Break the Power of the Vikings.



O the shores of fruitful Ireland  
Oft the Northern Vikings came,  
For the wanderers from Erin  
Published everywhere her fame.

Till at length these foreign pirates  
Quenched the light that burned so fair ;  
Learning, piety, and manners,  
Almost ceased to flourish there.

Then no more with artist finger  
Traced the scribe his glowing scroll ;  
Thence he bore his art, and wrought it,  
Undisturbed by battle roll.

And the goldsmiths' cunning workers  
Ceased to ply their mystic trade,  
For their hands the axe should fashion,  
Skean, and spear, and battle-blade.

For, alas! those pagan warriors  
Gained o'er Ireland's shores a sway;  
And the Christian faith was passing  
With her sainted sons away.

So the land was full of wailing,  
And her cry went up to heaven,  
Till at length the hero Brian  
In her darkest hour was given.

He was then a prince in Munster,  
And his soul was torn with pain  
When he saw the wave sweep onward,  
Bearing high the conquering Dane.

And the power that gained them footing  
Oft did Ireland's sons supply,  
By their endless feuds and quarrels,  
And their lack of loyalty.

E'en the King of Leinster joined them,  
And some recreant chiefs beside;  
Then arose fair Erin's champion,  
And the fearless Brian cried :

“ Union's strength, disunion's weakness,  
Brothers bound are brothers free;  
Cease from enmity and discord;—  
Brethren, rise and follow me.”

Won by words of sagest wisdom,  
And by deeds of matchless might,  
Erin's sons flocked to his banner,  
Beat the Danes in many a fight.

On the flowery plains of Sulcoit,  
Fast and thick the Vikings fell,  
As the leaves when breezy autumn  
Sweeps o'er wood and forest dell.

And again in many a battle  
Brian bowed their haughty pride,  
When the flower of Danish knighthood  
Perished at their leader's side.



Till at length their strength was broken,  
And for peace they humbly prayed,  
Which the good King Brian granted ;  
And his people's swords were stayed.

Then he said to Maelmurra,  
" That all enmity may cease,  
I will take thy widowed sister  
As the pledge and seal of peace."

So he wed the false, fair Gormley ;  
And to hinder further strife,  
Gave his gentle daughter Savé  
To be Danish Sitric's wife.

Thus the wave was backward driven,  
But it lingered on the shore,  
For the Vikings held the seaports,  
Though their day of power was o'er.

Soon on Tara's stone \* of office  
Brian took the Ard-Righ's † place ;

---

\* The famous "stone of destiny," or "Lia Fail," afterwards said to have been taken to Scone, and subsequently to Westminster, where it is placed under the coronation chair.

† Head King, to whom all the other kings owed fealty.

And I ween no monarch ever  
Wore his crown with nobler grace.

Long he dwelt in fair Kincora,\*  
Every king his rule confessed ;  
Peace and plenty then abounded,  
And for years the land had rest.

---

\* The royal residence, near Killaloe.





## PART II.

### Gormley's Treachery.



UT the dove that Brian cherished  
Bore in truth a vulture's heart ;  
In her peaceful home she languished ;  
Gormley played the traitor's part.

For she whispered Maelmurra,  
And her voice was big with scorn,  
" Wilt thou aye be Brian's vassal ?  
Thou and I were nobler born.

" Now's thine hour ; the King is failing,  
And with age his eyes are dim ;  
Rise, and be true King of Leinster,  
Thou hast nought to fear from him.

"Sitric, he will gladly aid thee;  
Fortune yet may smile on thee;  
Thou hast many a friend in Erin,  
As in lands beyond the sea."

So the seed her hand had scattered  
Grew, and bore a deadly fruit;  
For her fierce and crafty brother  
Gladly hearkened to her suit.

Soon his messengers are speeding  
From fair Erin's peaceful strand,  
Bearers of his traitor summons  
To the chiefs of many a land.

Fierce Earl Brodar scents the conflict,  
As the charger sniffs the war,  
Or the carrion-loving raven  
Sees the carnage from afar.

So in Man the news is ringing,  
And the pirates' hearts beat high,  
As they gaze across the billows  
On the prey that seems so nigh.

On the messengers are pressing  
To the Vikings of the west ;  
To the sea-girt gems of ocean  
That on Scotland's bosom rest.

Sigurd in his home in Orkney  
Welcomes Maelmurra's call ;  
Loud the noise of preparation  
Sounds throughout the sea-king's hall,

Till it echoes on to Norway,  
Piercing through her ice-bound fiords,  
Stirs the heart-strings of the Norsemen ;  
From the scabbards flash their swords,

And her princes don their armour,  
While they wildly jeer and scoff ;  
Little deeming of the fingers  
That shall soon their harness doff.

Now the Danes have caught the war-note ;  
Music to their distraught ears  
Are the hateful jars of discord,  
Dying groans and women's tears.

To the shore their hordes are swarming,  
Soon their ships for sea are manned,  
And they join the great armada,  
Bound for Erin's hapless land.

On they sail, their numbers swelling,  
Flanders, France, and Normandie  
Furnish many a gallant vessel,  
Many a chief of high degree.

When the April sun is shining,  
And the land with spring is gay,  
Wafted by the ruthless east wind,  
Down they sail on Dublin Bay.

Ospack bears the news to Brian  
That the ships are on the sea ;  
Sitric from the walls of Dublin  
Hails their coming sails with glee.

'Tis the eve of Holy Friday ; \*  
Yet is peace unknown on earth,

---

\* It is said that the pagan leaders wished to delay the attack till Good Friday, for the Viking Earl of Man (Brodar) had found from his sorcery that if they fought on that day success would attend their arms. Besides, they seem to have doubted whether Brian would have given battle on a day that they knew him to esteem so holy. The battle was fought on Good Friday, April 23rd, 1014 A.D.

Though the Saviour's blood has dewed it,  
Though His healing wounds gush forth.

All is hushed in expectation ;  
" Night has spread her sable pall "  
Over Erin's sons and foemen,  
As God's hand is over all.

" Up, and strike with morn ! " speaks Brodar,  
" For the Christians dare not fight ;  
As the chaff they'll flee before us,  
If I read the omens right."







### PART III.

#### Battle of Clontarf.



LOWLY breaks the light of morning  
O'er the shores of Dublin Bay,  
Where the foes are grimly watching  
For the dawning of the day.

Through the misty clouds of darkness  
Soon the Vikings are descried,  
Waiting in their hundred galleys  
For the flowing of the tide.

From within the walls of Dublin  
Faintly rings a bugle call,  
Breaking through the awful stillness  
That is reigning over all.

Then along the banks of Tolka \*  
From the shades of Tomar wood,  
Comes the sound as when an eagle  
Stirreth up her warlike brood.

Ere the sun has kissed the hill-tops,  
From its depths the Irish pour  
All their wealth of strength, and courage,  
To the river-side and shore.

Men of Desmond, men of Thomond,  
Connaughtmen from farthest west,  
E'en the loyal sons of Ulster †  
Have obeyed their King's behest.

Proudly smiles the aged Brian,  
As they pass beneath his eye,  
When at once the air is riven  
With a wild, exultant cry.

---

\* The night previous to the battle the Irish lay encamped in Tomar wood, on the banks of the river Tolka, which flows into Dublin Bay on its north-west side, where Ballybough bridge now stands. The scene of the battle lay most probably on both sides of this river, but principally between it and Dublin, extending over the sands at low water.

† Carrol, King of Oriel, in Ulster, and Maguire, Prince of Fermanagh, are said to have joined Brian at Clontarf.

Loud and long the note of welcome,  
Which is answered cheerily ;  
'Tis the men of Meath are joining  
With their good King Malachy.\*

He who wears "the golden collar"  
Soon in Brian's arms is pressed ;  
And the old King whispers softly,  
As he leans upon his breast :

"There is that I would reveal thee,  
Though none other now may hear,  
What last night my race's aibhell †  
Wailed into my waking ear.

"I shall fall, my children perish,  
And my dynasty ‡ shall fail ;  
But the cause of God shall prosper,  
And this day our arms prevail.

---

\* For the better understanding of their respective positions towards each other, see note at end.

† Banshee.

‡ Of Brian's five sons present at the battle of Clontarf four perished, besides his grandson Turloch, and a host of nephews and other near relatives. When his son Donagh laid his father's crown at the feet of the Pope (Alexander II.), we may say that the

“As Ard-Righ thou shalt succeed me ;  
May God’s blessing on thee be ;  
And I humbly crave forgiveness  
That I e’er supplanted thee.

“Death is nearing, and I swear thee,  
’Twas not for ambition planned ;  
But I deemed my country needed  
Him who showed the strongest hand.

“Thou shalt live in song and story  
As her truest patriot son,  
Who did join his rival’s standard  
That her battles might be won.”

Brian mounts his milk-white charger,  
Proudly dons his royal crown ;  
While upon his silken tunic  
Beard and tress flow silvering down.

---

sty had ended, though we find that the members of the  
rian family still maintained a rule in Munster, and even  
re than one laid claim to having ruled as Ard-Righ. It  
ems probable, however, that there was no real “Head King”  
in Ireland from Malachy’s death till the arrival of the English.

---

In one hand the Cross is gleaming,  
O'er it pours the new-born light;  
While his good blade, tried and trusty,  
Brightly shineth in his right.

Through the ranks his steed is pacing,  
High he waves his well-known sword;  
Every heart in courage rising  
As they catch each burning word.

“Strike this day for God and country—  
Strike for home, and child, and wife.  
Who would be a Danish bondsman?  
Who would live for death in life?

“God this day implants the courage,  
Strength bestows to make you free;  
Rise, and drive your ancient foemen  
Back into their native sea.”

Then he raised the Christian symbol,  
And the agéd monarch cried:  
“Fear not death, ye men of Erin,  
Christ for you this day once died.

“Gladly would I lead the onset,  
But my will alone is strong :  
Murrogh, he shall be your leader,  
Lest mine age should do you wrong.”

Now the ranks for fight are forming,  
E'en the coming foe they scan ;  
Murrogh with his brave Dalcassians \*  
Hastes to lead the battle van.

As he turns to bid them forward,  
On his right he sees advance,  
All alone, the fair young Dunlaing,  
Hastening on with joyous glance.

Three great steps he springs to meet him,  
Greets the hero with a kiss ;  
Not a chief in all the army  
Owns a nobler form than his.

---

\* Brian's tribe was called the Dalcassian ; they always claimed  
as their right to fight in the van of battle.

“ Oh, fair youth, I gladly see thee,  
Wherefore hast thou stayed so long ?  
The fond love some maiden bears thee  
Must, in truth, be passing strong.”

“ Nay, my Prince, no maid 's forsaken ;  
It is life I leave for thee ;  
I this night shall sleep beside thee  
In the arms of victory.”

“ Dost thou say it ? ” Murrogh answers ;  
“ Aye, Craglea's aibhell \* cried,  
Thou and I and youthful Turlogh  
Sleep in death ere eventide.”

“ Forward ! ” shouts the dauntless Murrogh,  
Undismayed that death is near ;  
“ Forward ! for the foe is moving,”  
Now is passed from front to rear.

---

\* The same Banshee as warned Brian.



Then there comes a voice like thunder,  
Sounding o'er the sands afar ;  
Thrice it cries, " Oh, where is Domhnall ? \*  
Domhnall, the high steward of Mar ? "

It is Plait, the northern hero,  
Who last night his challenge sent ;  
Clad in his unrivalled armour  
Now on deadly combat bent.

" Here, thou reptile ! " Domhnall answers :  
Then they close, but never part ;  
Soon the sword of each is piercing  
Through the other's bleeding heart.

Now the light of heaven is darkened,  
For each archer bends his bow,  
And the Vikings' poisoned arrows  
Rain upon their dauntless foe.

---

\* Thus it was that the ancestors of the royal Stuarts and the Gael of Alba fought at Clontarf, in aid of their Irish kindred, under the standard of Brian Boru.

On they rush—though galled—unbroken,  
With a wounded lion's roar,  
Closing with their fierce invaders,  
Where they gather by the shore.

As a strong, resistless sea wave  
O'er some rocky headland breaks,  
Lashing all the sea around it,  
While the earth's foundation shakes :

So the meeting of those fell foes  
Echoes to the woods around ;  
Dublin hears the awful signal,  
And the hills have caught the sound ;

And the earth she seems to tremble  
At the crims'ning of her sod,  
Where her sons are bravely bleeding  
For their fatherland and God.

See, Earl Brodar leads the Vikings,  
In steel panoply arrayed—  
Once a consecrated deacon,  
Now from Christ a renegade !

And they said the fiends he worshipped  
Hovered o'er him in the fight ;  
So that on his triple harness  
Mortal's steel could never bite.

Like a mane his coal-black elf-locks,  
That were wont to woo the wind,  
Now beneath a brazen girdle  
At his waist are close confined.

Oh, what deeds of deathless daring  
Did that April sun behold,  
Till the tide \* that ebbd at noonday  
To its bourn had backward rolled !

Scores of mighty mailéd warriors,  
That had daunted many a foe,  
Fell before the unclad † Irish,  
And in death were now laid low.

---

\* The battle is said to have lasted from high tide in the morning to high tide in the evening.

† I use the word "unclad" to mean that they wore no armour.

Through the host three times had Murrogh  
Hewn a free but bloody way ;  
Fierce in death full fifty Vikings  
On the hero's pathway lay,

Ere he met the great Earl Sigurd,  
Giant chief, so fierce and brave :  
Ne'er again shall Orkney see him ;  
Irish turf must deck his grave.

Next he slew the hapless Conmaol,  
Young Prince Carolus then fell :  
Who will bear the news to Norway ?  
Who his royal father tell ?

Anrud, sworn to ruthless vengeance,  
Seeks for Murrogh through the fray ;  
But meanwhile the noise of battle  
To the right has rolled away,

There the Connaughtmen are striving  
With false Maelmurra's clan ;  
"Death," they cry, "to every traitor !  
Death to every Leinster man !"

Conaing sees their King advancing,  
Waves his reeking sword on high ;  
“Guard thyself, thou perjured traitor !  
Or thy blood my blade shall dye.”

Long they strive ; the lithe young Conaing  
Darts and doubles like a hound,  
Till at length the King is wounded,  
And he kneels upon the ground.

“If I fall, thou fallest with me,”  
Wildly Maelmurra cries ;  
Sheathes his sword in Conaing’s bosom,  
And beneath his victim dies.

Then the Irish Danes come rushing  
Outward from the sheltering town :  
On the tribes of Meath and Munster  
All their hordes are pouring down ;

Till the issue looms uncertain,  
For the scales begin to sway,  
And it seems as though the Vikings  
Must as victors claim the day.

---

From the Danish walls of Dublin  
Savé looks across the tide,  
And her heart is torn with anguish,  
Though her lord is at her side.

For her thoughts are with her kindred,  
With the brethren of her love ;  
'Tis for them her spirit's striving,  
Though her lips she dare not move.

"Spread Thy wings to shield my loved ones,  
Make Thy face on them to shine,  
Bear them safely through the conflict ;—  
If not my cause, Lord, 'tis Thine ;

"For their foes have spoiled Thine altars,  
Oft they've mocked Thy suffering's sign ;  
Prosper, then, Thy faithful people—  
'Tis Thy cause, O Lord, not mine ;

"For Thine arm can win the battle,  
Though the powers of hell combine ;  
Well I know that Thou shalt conquer—  
Lord, the cause is Thine, not mine."

So she watched brave Murrogh's banner,  
As it backward, onward rolled,  
Till the evening sun was sparkling  
On her tire and torques of gold.

"Well, O wife, do our good allies  
Reap with us yon harvest field;  
Many a glittering sheaf of barley  
To the lusty reapers yield."

Then she speaks, but gentle Savé  
Dares not meet the Dane's fierce eye:  
"Tarry till the day is over  
Ere thou boast," she makes reply.

---

While fair Erin's fate is trembling,  
And her noblest blood is poured  
Forth in generous libations  
On the emerald of her sward,

Where is he, whose kingly presence,  
In the thickest of the fray,  
Oft hath turned the tide of battle,  
Changed the fortunes of the day?

At his tent-door Brian 's kneeling,  
Crownless in his snow-white hair;  
On the cross his arms are leaning,  
While his soul's absorbed in prayer.

He has knelt since early morning,  
When to meet their country's foe  
From the pleasant banks of Tolka  
He had bid his children go.

"Speak, my son, how goes the battle?"  
Once he asked his youthful page,  
When ere noon the noise of conflict  
O'er the sands did wildly rage.

"Close and vig'rous is the fighting,  
Loud the noise, as though they hewed,  
With the strength of seven battalions,  
All the trees of Tomar wood.

"Murrogh's banner still is floating;  
Where it moves there many fall;  
Round it press his tribes' tall standards,  
Closing it within their wall."



Now again the King is praying,  
Pleads as he who did prevail ;  
Sending cries of faith and anguish  
Upward through the azure veil.

Long he strives in ghostly conflict,  
Till the midday hours are past ;  
“ Speak, my son, how goes the battle ? ”  
Issues from his lips at last.

“ Multitudes on both sides falling ;  
Blood and wounds do all disguise,  
So, methinks, not e’en a father  
His own son could recognise.”

Then a pause ; but soon he addeth,  
“ Oh, my liege, I now descry,  
As they press to Dublin, westward,  
Murrough’s banner waves on high.”

“ While it waves the right shall prosper ;  
Guard its folds with jealous care,”  
Brian cries, the Cross still clasping ;—  
Then he kneels absorbed in prayer.

So he kneels, until the ev'ning  
Casts its shadows on his breast.  
And the blood-red sun is hastening  
To its chambers in the west.

And again the tide is flowing  
O'er the sands of Dublin Bay ;  
But no more in peaceful cadence,  
As she flowed at dawn of day.

Now her waves come wildly dashing,  
And their crests with gore are red ;  
For beneath her heaving bosom  
Coldly sleep the mighty dead.

And she moans o'er youthful Turlogh,  
Bathes his brow with many a tear,  
As he lies above the Vikings,  
At the Tolka's salmon weir.

While her shore is red with carnage,  
And they fight within the wave,  
Thrusting back the vanquished Vikings,  
There to find a watery grave.

Then again the King is asking  
Of the fortunes of the day,  
And the youthful page is striving  
All its progress to portray.

" 'Tis as though a conflagration  
Long had raged in Tomar wood,  
Burning all the trees and saplings,  
Till alone its great oaks stood.

" So the soldiery are fallen ;  
E'en the lesser chiefs are slain ;  
And the mighty heroes only  
Now of either host remain.

" All of these are sorely wounded ;  
Yet our chiefs fight valiantly,  
As they drive the fierce invaders  
Back into the raging sea.

" Now the foreigners seem vanquished,  
And methinks the conflict's o'er ;  
But, alas, that I should tell it,  
Murrogh's banner waves no more ! "

---

Murrogh on the shore was standing,  
He had cast his sword away ;  
For his hand was strained and swollen  
With the slaughter of the day.

And he thought of the prediction,  
Deeming that the fight was o'er,  
When he saw a mailed warrior  
Quickly rising from the shore.

Murrogh seized him by the gorget,  
As a lion lays its paw  
On the fierce and wily leopard,  
Ere a movement Anrud saw ;

And he shook him from his harness,  
Which fell off with ringing sound,  
While he cast the Viking from him,  
All unclad upon the ground.

Murrogh held the sword of Anrud,  
And he stooped to thrust him through ;  
At that moment from his girdle  
Anrud snatched his dagger true.

“Long I’ve sought, and late I’ve found thee,”  
Anrud cried with savage glee :  
“Perish, slayer of my brother,  
In thine hour of victory !”

And he plunged the gleaming dagger  
In its noble owner’s breast ;  
As they fell, an awful stillness  
Seemed o’er all the scene to rest.

---

Brian knows his son has fallen,  
That Dalcassia’s strength is fled ;  
Donall, Conal, Flan, and Turlogh,  
All are numbered with the dead.

Then he speaks : “With Murrogh’s banner  
Erin as a nation fell ;  
But the heathen power is vanquished,  
And I know that all is well.

“Yet were the empire of the world  
Laid this moment at my feet,  
I the glittering gift would spurn,  
Deeming death a boon more sweet.”

"Rise, my lord, why wilt thou tarry?"  
Cries the page, aghast with fear;  
"While I speak two fierce blue \* Vikings  
To the tent are drawing near."

"Flight but ill becomes a monarch;  
Whither wouldst thou have me flee?  
'Tis ordained this day I perish,  
And I bow to Heaven's decree."

On they come,—the tents are nearing,—  
See the King; but pass him by:  
They are bound for sea-beat Edar; †  
To their ships the Vikings fly.

"Leave the priest his prayers to mumble,  
Brodar's hand seeks nobler prey."  
"Tis the King!" his comrade answers;  
Soon his steps does Brodar stay.

The grim guest but little welcomed  
Now has come as "death the friend;"  
Brian rises to receive him,  
Glad his summons to attend.

---

\* The page had never before seen armour, and consequently he described the steel-clad Vikings as "blue stark naked people."

† Howth, where some of their ships lay.

As a soldier king he flourished,  
As a soldier king he dies,  
Ere the Viking's axe has felled him,  
Ere upon the earth he lies,

His good sword has drunk the life-blood  
Of the Christian renegade:  
Calmly sinks the King beside him;  
Death has found him undismayed—

While the wrathful dying Viking  
Shrieks: "Let man his fellow tell  
How the mighty monarch Brian  
By the hand of Brodar fell!"

---

So the heathen power was broken;  
Thor and Woden winged their flight,  
With the races that upheld them,  
Back into the northern night.

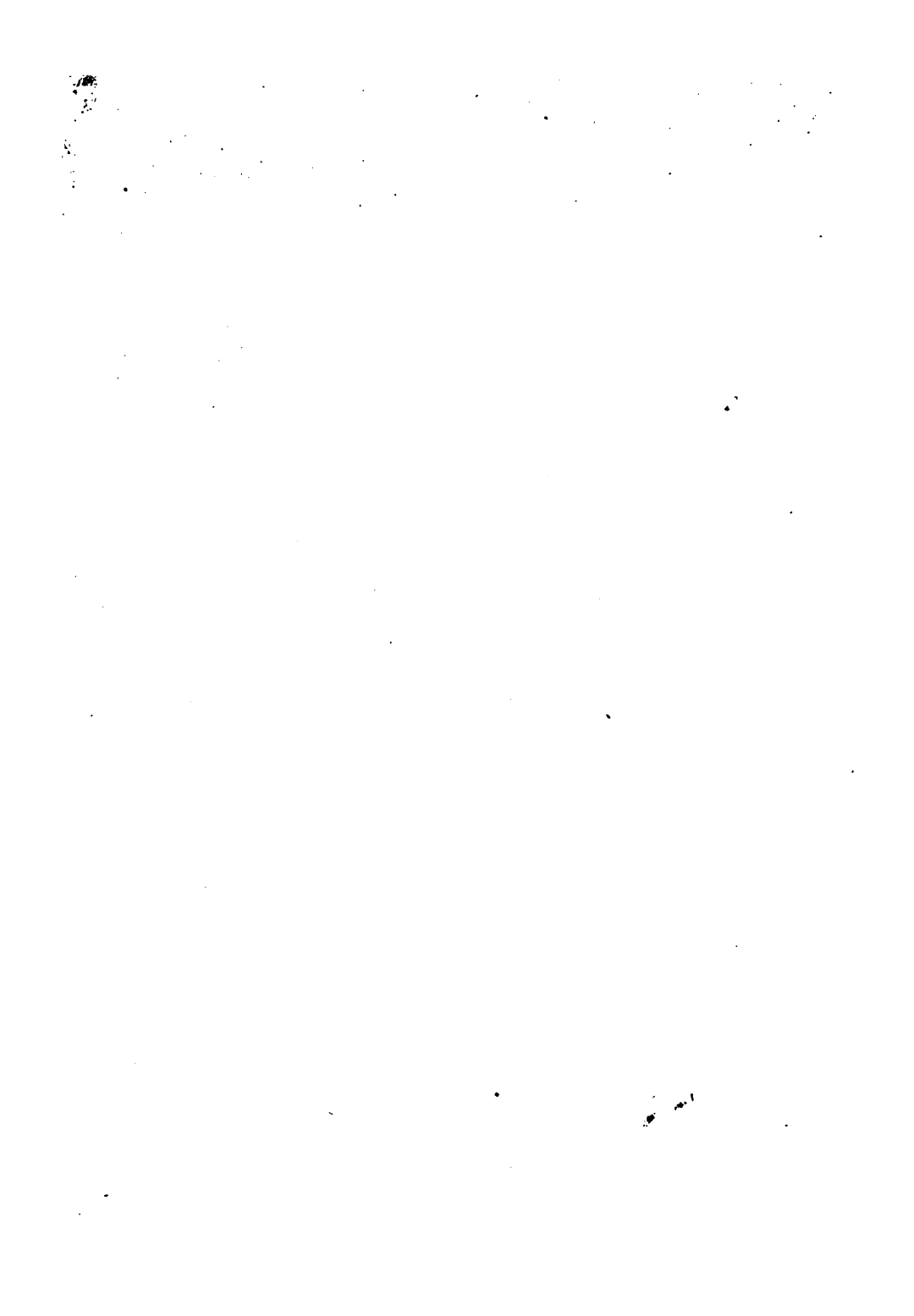
**NOTE.—BRIAN'S DEPOSAL OF MALACHY II.**

Shortly after the battle of Glen-Mama Brian, feeling himself sufficiently strong, marched on Tara, at the head of the Munster clans, and challenged Malachy to open battle, or to give hostages in acknowledgment of Brian's supremacy. Malachy asked for a month's preparation, promising at the end of that time to stake his sovereignty on the event of a battle, or to resign it into Brian's hands. During that period Malachy did his utmost to raise his allies, but having failed he took his resolution: attended by a small escort he rode to Tara, and entered Brian's presence, told him his dilemma, and how, though anxious to do battle for his crown if he could, he was not in a position to do so, and therefore he had come to submit himself. Brian was not to be outdone in generous confidence. "As thou hast come to my dwelling without surety or safeguard from me, I now grant thee a further respite of a year, during which time I will demand neither homage nor hostages at thy hand." The year elapsed, Malachy was as unable as before to resist Brian, and so he acknowledged his rival as his sovereign. Thus Brian became Ard-Righ in 1002.



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